(b) whether the project was delayed because of late environmental clearance from Government and the State has spent too much; and

(c) whether Government are considering to give extra amount in accordance with the request of Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Union Government had in May 1993 accorded approval to the proposal of Government of Gujarat for construction of fishing harbour at Jakhau at a cost of Rs. 1143.60 lakhs under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme with 100 per cent grant assistance due to its strategic location. Entire approved cost of the project amounting to Rs. 1143.60 lakhs has been released to the State Government in six instalments by December 1999. The project was to be completed within the approved cost before May 1996. The Government of Gujarat could not achieve this target instead approached the Union Government initially for approval of Revised Cost Estimate with cost escalation from Rs. 1143.60 lakhs to Rs. 2455 lakhs, which has been further revised to Rs. 5291 lakhs in May 2005. The State Government reported that delay in obtaining environmental clearance in one of the main factors among the others that attributed for cost escalation.

(c) The Government of Gujarat is to submit a comprehensive revised project report with relevant techno-economic details for evaluating reason-ability of the cost escalation.

Development of water-sheds in Andhra Pradesh

3365. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh Government has sought for a sanction of Rs. 221.46 crores from the Central Government for development of watersheds in Andhra Pradesh in view of the State having about 84,000 w**ater** bodies which have a direct linkage with poverty eradication;

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard;

(c) whether Government would sanction Rs. 221.46 crores at the earliest; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Agriculture has not received any specific proposal from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for development of water-sheds.

However, the Government of Andhra Pradesh submitted a proposal to the,Ministry of Water Resources, amounting to Rs. 221.47 crores for reno-vation of 2359 water bodies with German assistance. The proposal was included in the Annual Indo-German Consultations held In New Delhi during May 10-11,2005. The proposal was not considered for funding by the (German side.

Soil Erosion

3306. SHRI R.S. GAVAI:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of soil erosion is growing at an unacceptable rate in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the country's average soil erosion rate per hectare per annum and the present rate of soil erosion;

(c) Government's response thereto; and

(d) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken for solving the problem by implementing various programmes in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The soil formation and erosion is a natural process occurring simultaneously to maintain the equilibrium in eco-system. Due to over exploitation, unscientific use of natural resources etc. the land denudation is more than natural formation.

As per available estimate, the average rate of soil erosion in the country is 16.4 tonnes per hectare per year and over 5.3 billion tonnes of soil is lost every year through soil erosion. Soil loss varies from less than 1 tonnes/ha./year in dense forest area to more than 80 tonnes/ha./year in